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ABSTRACT

The history of reform movements in education has culminated in the current work of TheodoreSizer and John Goodlad. This paper discusses and describes the application ofSizer's and Goodlad's research to educational administration programs at the university level. The commonalities between each researcher's perspective, as applied to school reform, can be integrated into a holistic approach to better prepare future school leaders. The paper describes a pilot educational administration program at South Dakota State University that has combined the perspectives ofSizer and Goodlad with practitioners' experience in order to reform elementary-secondary education. The program uses student portfolios and oral examinations (recommended bySizer) and advocates closer university-school partnerships (suggested by Goodlad). The long-term goal of the program's efforts is to provide support to area elementary and secondary schools engaged in reform and restructuring. (LMI)

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Sizer and Goodlad: Implications for Higher Education Administrative Programs

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Abstract

The history of reform movements in education has culminated in the current work of Theodore Sizer and John Goodlad. This paper is intended to discuss and describe the application of Sizer's research, along with that of Goodlad to educational administration programs at the college or university level. The commonalities between Sizer and Goodlad's ideas, as applied to these reform movements, can be integrated into a holistic approach to better prepare future school leaders. South Dakota State University is piloting this program to combine the best of this research with the experience of public school practitioners to reform and restructure area elementary and secondary schools. The long-term goal of these efforts is to provide support to area elementary and secondary schools engaged in reforming and restructuring, while SDSU applies similar efforts to its own courses and programs in Educational Leadership.

As the fall semester of 1994 approaches, educational administration professors in the Department of Educational Leadership at South Dakota State University will embark upon an exciting journey in an attempt to apply current reform initiatives to the graduate programs offered to professional educators. More specifically, we hope to experiment with the work of Theodore Sizer and the Coalition of Essential Schools along with that of John Goodlad's National Network for Educational Renewal and his proposals to produce a substantive foundation for what we do in the name of educational leadership. This paper is intended to provide the reader with an analysis of a portion of the related thinking of Sizer and Goodlad to the delivery of our Educational Leadership program, as well as our efforts to establish closer university-school partnerships in teacher education and school reform.

A Brief Historical Perspective

Some preparatory discussion should provide strength to the reasons for the very existence of current reform initiatives:

In 1957, Sputnik rocked the American educational world. Critics began an assault, which has yet to show evidence of retreat, upon our time-honored educational traditions that led to dramatic efforts to "beef up" a curriculum that had somehow allowed us to fall behind the Russians. Throughout the 1960's and 1970's, numerous changes were initiated in a nationwide attempt to solve this problem. Changes to secondary education through this period were characterized by an increase in Carnegie units of credit required for graduation. It seemed that many school boards bought into the idea that the more units the better — after all, this was a clear demonstration of curriculum improvement, right? In addition to this time of "more," quite a lot of traditional coursework was replaced with alternative offerings characterized by flashy titles and non-traditional content. We

began losing the basics. Have you noticed the recent evidence to show that our high school graduates don't know geography? This is just one example. American high schools became places where students could literally "shop" their way through the curriculum for classes that tried to provide something for everyone. To make matters worse, school administrators began to compete with one another for the highest number of units available as electives for their students. As this game continued through the 1970's and early 1980's, student SAT scores declined, as did the ranking of American high school graduates compared with those of other industrialized nations, with particular focus on the contrasts between Japanese and American students. Ask any school board member what he or she actually knows about individual students who walk across the stage at graduation and receive a diploma. The answer will generally be that they don't know very much beyond the fact that the student earned at least twenty-odd units of credit with at least a D-average. At no point, at the time of matriculation, do most school districts require an authentic demonstration of program mastery.

A number of educators have attempted to analyze these problems and propose solutions. 1979, Ron Edmonds provided educational leaders with their first glimpse of what could and should be in educational reform as clearly outlined in his article "Effective Schools for the Urban Poor." His work was supported by such well known educational leadership researchers as Richard Andrews, now Dean of Education at the University of Missouri, and Larry Lazotte, currently an educational consultant and formerly a long-time professor at Michigan State University. The Effective Schools movement now stands as foundational for many of the current reform initiatives underway in the United States. It has even survived, unscathed, the attacks of the religious right that have disrupted and destroyed other reform initiatives. And, the Effective Schools movement has been adopted and institutionalized by many educational administration departments in

colleges and universities throughout the country as the basis for program delivery and development.

In 1983, a report entitled A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform was published by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. This report identified significant problems and made recommendations to address these problems. Essentially, the report served notice to American educators that little improvement had occurred since Sputnik in spite of the initiation of various reform movements. The report cited evidence of incredible illiteracy rates among our young, lower achievement of high school students on standardized tests than at the time of Sputnik, a twenty-year long record of decline in SAT scores, inability of our students to compete, academically, with those in other industrialized nations, and a host of other unsettling information about the effectiveness of our nation's schools. The report made headlines across the country and kicked off a news media blitz which continues even now to investigate and challenge the educational status quo.

About the same time A Nation at Risk was published, John Goodlad wrote A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future. In this important study, Goodlad presented an intense examination of day-to-day life in the secondary classroom of the early 1980's that confirmed many of the concerns stated by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983). Goodlad also introduced the idea of schools of choice in public education. The debate about choice has raged for over ten years now, with a number of states in the adoption phase. But of most importance, Goodlad explored the idea that public schools, in tandem with colleges and universities, could become demonstration sites for pre-service and in-service teacher education in an educational "partnership" to reform teaching and positively impact learning.

A year later, Theodore Sizer, after an extensive study of teaching and learning in American high schools as charged by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, published Horace's Compromise — the Dilemma of the American High School. This work was followed shortly by Powell, Farrar, and Cohen's The Shopping Mall High School — Winners and Losers in the Educational Marketplace. Both of these studies held profound implications for those intent upon the need to reform and restructure, and those engaged in the pursuit of what would really work, in changing the way we approached secondary education in the United States. The latter of these two publications examined the concerns expressed above regarding the "something for everyone" curriculum in a thorough and thought-provoking manner. It is here that the idea of educational "treaties" between students and teachers first appears in the research.

Sizer

Sizer's work was, to say the least, awe-inspiring. He took his readers through schools and classrooms all over the country, providing objective insights as to what he saw, what seems to have gone wrong, and finally, what might be if one were to find the "Camelot" of schools. He began discussing what was essential for educators to do and for students to know. Simply stated, Sizer's essentials included students, teachers, and academic subject matter. He saw students who were idle, bored, unmotivated, and characterized simply by the term "docility." Students were not learning to think deeply and were not demonstrating mastery of anything except the compromises and treaties necessary to survive and matriculate. These characteristics abounded everywhere, school by school, state by state. He saw teachers with poor working conditions who lacked the freedom or flexibility to teach unbridled; they were unrewarded and unappreciated. Students and teachers labored together in a world over which they had no control - trapped by the tyranny of the bell, class periods, semester schedules, Carnegie units, constant interruptions,

and a paralysis of imagination. And he encountered aged pedagogy and uniform curricula that seemed to accommodate the above mentioned compromises.

In Horace's Compromise, Sizer is quick to say that no two schools are alike, and therefore there is no model or template for reformers to snag and replicate. But he did identify what he calls the "Nine Common Principles" which make up the basic educational philosophies and belief systems adopted by schools attempting to give his brand of reform a try. The principles from Horace are, in brief, as follows:

- Focus. Schools should focus on helping students to learn to use their minds well.
- Simple Goals. Schools should require that students master a limited number of centrally important skills and areas of knowledge.
- Universal Goals. The school's goals should apply to all students, while at the same time, should be flexible to meet the needs of every group or class of student.
- Personalization. Teaching and learning should be personalized. Teachers must not be responsible for more than eighty students per day and should have substantial freedom in pedagogy and material selection.
- Student-as-Worker. The metaphor of the school should reflect student-as-worker, teacher-as-coach.
- Diploma by Exhibition. Students must be required to show what they know and can do before being allowed to march across the stage.
- Attitude. The tone of the school should be one of trust and decent treatment of students and teachers, coupled with high expectations.
- Staff. The principal and teachers should come to see themselves as educational generalists, rather than specialists, with multiple teaching obligations.

- Budget. The ultimate administrative dollar target to lower pupil-teacher ratios, provide collaboration time for faculty, ensure competitive salaries and rewards for educators should not exceed ten percent of the traditional budget.

After the publication of Horace's Compromise, Sizer directed the development of the formal organization now called the Coalition of Essential Schools composed of schools and school districts wishing to remain closely connected to one another in this remarkable work. The Coalition has now joined with the Education Commission of the States, which includes every state in the union except Montana. The joint effort of the Coalition and ECS is commonly referred to as "Re:Learning." As we approach the mid-1990's, interest in Sizer's work seems to be sweeping the nation. Over a dozen states have formally declared themselves to be a "Re:Learning State." Several hundred schools, mostly secondary (but there are a growing number of elementary schools involved) have begun restructuring efforts as a part of the Coalition of Essential Schools. Now it seems time for post-secondary institutions to work to develop similar efforts along side one another. Kathleen Cushman (1993), from the University of Southern Maine, describes a similar initiative called the Southern Maine Partnership. In this program, Goodlad's National Network for Educational Renewal is combined with Sizer's Coalition. Its agenda states that no part of school renewal should take place in isolation. School reform, undergraduate teacher preparation, development of master teachers and training of effective instructional leaders all must be firmly connected.

In 1992, Sizer published his second major work in this field, Horace's School: Redesigning the American High School. This book further analyzed the dysfunction in America's secondary schools and offered suggestions for remediation. Sizer discussed the meaning of being "well-educated" in America, and what that means in terms of how schools might conduct their business. He

expanded his thinking about student exhibitions and what it really means to demonstrate mastery. It is in this realm, most specifically as will be later discussed, that we have found opportunity for application to our graduate program at SDSU.

Goodlad

John Goodlad, like Sizer, has been writing about educational reform for a great many years, and has had a marked, positive, impact upon the educational world. Most recently, he has brought focus upon the splendid opportunity for schools of education in colleges and universities to serve as prime movers for change in improving the quality of education in the United States in tandem with elementary and secondary schools. In Teachers for Our Nation's Schools (1990), The Moral Dimensions of Teaching (1990), and Places Where Teachers are Taught (1990), Goodlad established a foundation for his most recent and most applicable book, Educational Renewal (1994).

In Educational Renewal, Goodlad proposes the establishment of "centers for pedagogy" in schools of education. The centers would serve to unite reformers in elementary and secondary schools with their counterparts in colleges and universities. Centers would serve to coordinate joint schooling improvement efforts and would design and deliver collegiate programs in the same fashion as their elementary and secondary associates. At SDSU, these efforts are currently underway. Without having established a formal center for pedagogy, we have developed an exemplary undergraduate teacher training program that has united us with nearly a dozen local public school districts in an informal structure coordinated by the college.

As Educational Leadership professors share responsibilities with undergraduate teacher educators in this area, we have formed a number of positive professional relationships that have proven to be beneficial as we move forward with our internal reform efforts, not to mention our work to support reform among

our partnership schools. The potential for these connections is powerful: this fall nine of our professors will join with nearly fifteen area public school teachers and administrators to attend the Fall Forum for the Coalition of Essential Schools in Chicago. The conference is the first to be jointly presented by Sizer and Goodlad. This event will serve as a "retreat" of sorts as the group will spend substantial time together in a unique effort to bring the Sizer Goodlad work home to South Dakota. This shared experience will allow us to synthesize the ideas in a fashion that will facilitate application in our professional partnerships.

Examples exist at SDSU of how these two movements can be combined into an integrated whole. During the past year, professors in Educational Leadership, joined by others in Undergraduate Teacher Education, have begun experimenting with the Sizer Goodlad initiatives. These innovations have been conducted in a variety of graduate and undergraduate level courses, and at the graduate level have yet to become institutionalized as a part of the general program.

From Sizer's work, we have been taken with his thinking about portfolios and exhibitions. At the course level, several professors have begun replacing or expanding traditional assessments to include an expectation for a well-produced portfolio. The portfolios generally contain a substantial amount of reflective writing about classroom discussion, reviews and reflections about journal articles and textbook readings, supported by a sample of formal writing demonstrated by a research paper. Exhibitions have replaced "presentations" and are designed to provide the class members with opportunities to demonstrate deeper mastery of specific course content area agreed to be essential by the professor and student. Both portfolios and exhibitions are intended to do several things to improve the quality of individual course and the entire program for our graduate students:

- provide a focus on assisting them in learning to use their minds well:

- ensuring that students take a larger role in their own learning and skill development;
- requiring that students be able to show what they know before course or program exit;
- provide them with documentation of their work and demonstrate professional growth and competency to enter the field of school administration.

At the program level, the conversation is underway among engaged faculty as to how to best synthesize portfolios and exhibitions from the required thirty-six hours of coursework, into something that makes sense for incorporation in final matriculation exercises. Our Master's of Education program provides for a final written examination followed by an oral examination. We require a "capstone" course at the end of every graduate program to encourage the synthesis of coursework. It would naturally follow that capstone serve as the perfect place to analyze course portfolios and develop a final "program portfolio" that would demonstrate to the reader the best work the student has done throughout the entire program. This synthesis portfolio would be a perfect support to, or possibly even a replacement for, the written examination. It could then be brought to the oral examination and used as the primary source to accompany the program exit exhibition.

The final exhibition of mastery, as Sizer has identified to be critical in bringing authenticity to matriculation, is essentially already in place in our graduate program. The oral examination is a two-hour session, attended by three professors from the students graduate committee and one professor from another program in the university system. The student is expected to provide the oral committee with an in-depth presentation of his or her educational administration "platform," to use a term Bruce Barnett has made popular at the University of

Northern Colorado (1992). After articulating a platform, or belief system, students respond to relevant questions from the committee. Professors generally ask questions that speak to the candidate's presentation and coursework preparation. Parameters for these questions are identified during the capstone experience to assist the student in preparation for matriculation.

Examples of matriculation exam questions that might be asked are as follows:

- Identify, from your teaching experience and from your coursework, characteristics of an effective building principal, and tell us exactly how you intend to demonstrate these characteristics.
- From your coursework in school law, tell us the due process procedure that you would use in handling a major disciplinary problem with a student.
- In your analysis of current reform initiatives, tell us which ones really stir your blood, and why.
- Identify the characteristics of an effective teacher. Apply these to hiring and to teacher evaluation. Model, in a five minute presentation, a sample of effective teaching.
- Assume you have been asked by your superintendent to conduct a survey of parental and student attitudes toward alcohol consumption and drug usage by students. What procedure would you use to accomplish this assignment and how would you analyze and communicate the results.
- Discuss and demonstrate your concept of ethics as it applies to specific situations that you provide for us from the school environment.

These ideas for examination are straight from Sizer. One can see that the questions require more than typical short answers - they require a demonstration of mastery and a deeper understanding in order to answer them well. Sizer proposes similar questioning for secondary students to demonstrate mastery. We believe that

by implementing these ideas at the course level and at the program level. we can substantially strengthen our Educational Leadership program at SDSU and, in tandem, support improvement in area elementary and secondary schools. The ultimate goal of these changes is, of course, to make sure that our graduates are ready to enter the principalship in with appropriate leadership and management skills, supported by philosophical underpinnings that reflect statesmanship, moral stewardship, and professional ethics that will provide instructional leadership to area schools. We believe that this kind of leader will be well-equipped to stand at the forefront of innovation and change in schooling.

Conclusion

It is notable that the idea of closer collaboration between elementary and secondary schools with counterparts in colleges and universities has been slow to catch on in programs for Educational Administration. Many times we are quick to promote new research driven ideas. It would seem that the time has come for us to become much more closely aligned and more directly involved with our colleagues in public education as they begin the journey into reform and change. Colleges and universities can serve as strong supporters and collaborators for reform. We should not be hesitant to implement reform and model appropriate initiatives in our own graduate classes and graduate program --- particularly those initiatives that are central to the work going on in our partner schools. Professors in Educational Leadership at South Dakota State University are working to make these ideas a reality. Stay tuned for a progress report next year.

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